ON TOOLS FOR ORNAMENTATION OF THE POTTERY IN THE BASARABI CULTURE

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By impression of any tool into the wet clay of a vessel, we get various stamped or impressed motifs; in the majority of the prehistorical cultures they are arranged in straight line strings, or, more seldom, are symetrically grouped into simple geometrical figures on the most prominent parts of a vessel. The stamp impression are ofen filled with the whitewash mass wich contributes to the prominence of the impressed motifs on the smooth surfaces of vessels of a finer texture. The stamped and encrusted poterry was especially favoured in the cultures of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages throughout the wider area of the lower Danube[1]. According to the manner of impression two groups of stamped motifs can be distinguished. The first group consists of stamp impressions that leave impressed „S" motifs: small rhombic fields, mini-rosette or small cross-divided circles. The second group is made of stamp impressions wich produce so-called pseudo-cord motif. These two manners of impression were used simultaneously and often were applied on the same vessel.

Tools for ornamentation of pottery are precious and rare finds, most commonly discovered in settlements. Apart from individual finds of small stamps made of bone or baker clay, we can mention some rare tools wich, judjing by their shape, were probably used to polish ceramic pots and to make shallow grooves. Several polished stone tools in the shape of short knives with thinned blade were discovered along with the bone tools for the impression of the pseudo-cord, in Târpești settlement (the Sabatinovka-Noua culture) in East Romania (T. 1/9—11)[2].

The remains of a pottery shop from the Early Iron Age settlement (VIII—VII century) in the village of Sava (Varna district), in S-E of Bulgaria, deserve particular attention[3]. Along with a rectangular room, the remains of a kiln and numerous finds of badly baked, deformed vessels, there were discovered several tools for ornamentation of pottery made of baked clay, bone and polished stone. Along with smaller stone polishers, a stone tool with a very thinned, arched end was found, wich was probably also used to ornament vessels. A short, cylindrical bone stamp is at the one end shaped to leave small impressions of double hexagons. Two small, cylindrical tools made of baked clay terminate at both ends in stamps for the impression into the wet clay of a vessel (T. I/1, 2). One stamp was used to impress two small concentric circles, with/or without a point in the center. Another stamp terminates at one end in plastically modelled double circles, with a point in the center, and at the other, in a narrow and short rib in the shape of letter „S". It can be noted that

the imprint of the „S" stamp, if it is drawn correctely, belongs to the so-called angular „S" motif (the upper parts of the letter „S" are angulary broken) wich is most commonly impressed in the upright position into the vessels of the Psenicevo culture. According to the find of fibula with so-called nodular appendage on the arch, discovered in the waste pit near a kiln, the shop for the making of baked clay vessels dates from the end of VIII or the first half/of VII century. Let us remark that a ceramic stamp for the impression of the pseudo-cord motif from the Sava settlement was published (T. II/2)[4].

Stamps for the ornamentation of pottery were mostly discovered in the Early Iron Age settlements on the territory of Eastern Europe. As far as we know, the majority consists of tools for the impression of the so-called pseudo-cord motif, while among the others, the stamps with stamped motifs rarely were the subject of a special paper, such as the find of ceramic tool for the impression of the pseudo-cord motif from the Cozia settlement (Iași county), wich is classified as belonging to the Babadag group (Babadag II phase) (T. II/3)[5]. B. Hänsel has collected several ceramic and bone stamps from the early and developed phase of the older Iron Age settlements in the area from Gate to East Moldavia[6]. We have attemped, without any pretension to completeness, to apend the list of finds of this kind, limiting ourselves mainly to the babed clay tools, also discovered in the Basarabi culture settlements (Map. 1).

Bone tools were particulary used in the settlements of the Noua-Sabatinovka complex[7]. The tools are commonly made from tubular bones, while the functional part wich is impressed into the wet clay is serrated at the end, or the joint (T. I/6—8), while the use of platoid bone, probably a part of a shoulder blade, is rarer. The serrated tools made from a triangular platoid bone comes from Solončeny (Rezina district), in Moldavia[8], while stamps made of bones with a joint preserved, apart from the above mentioned bone tools from Tîrpești settlement, were discovered in the late Bronze Age settlement Lupșanu (Ialomița county), belonging to the Coslogeni culture (S-E Romania, between The Danube and Ialomița rivers)[9], at the Fundenii-Doamnei site (Tei V phase or Noua group), near Bucharest[10], and in the Valea Lupului settlement, in Moldavia wich belongs to the Noua culture[11]. Even seven tools made of bones with a joint preserved are discovered in Sebeș — „Podu Pripocului" (Noua culture); published in Symposia Thracologica, 9, pl. 56. Let us mention the similar tools from the early Černoles culture (Belogrudovka phase) originating from a settlemnt in the village of Keljmenci (T. I/8) and Oselivka (T. I/7), from the Early Iron Age in the southern Russian steppes[12]. The bone tools for the impression of serrated pseudo-cord motif were not discovered west of Muntenia. We know only a bone tool from the Ghidici settlement, belonging to the Žuto-Brdo Gîrla Mare culture, in Oltenia, used for the impression of mini-rossetes, at the one end, and of concentric circles with a point in the center, at the other. (T. I/3)[13].

Ceramic stamps for ornamentation of vessels are of small dimenssions, only a few centimeters (most commonly 3—5 cm). Beside above mentioned ceramic stamps from Sava settlement in S-E Bulgaria, un-

usual appearance distinguishes the stamps from the Early Iron Age fortified settlement in the village of Grigorovka, near Vinica, in the central Dniester area (S-W Podoli) i.e. a part of Western Ukraine. On the pre-Scythian horizon of Grigorovska gradina, along with intented and stamped pottery of so-called early Zabotin type of the Černoles culture, three ceramic stamps were found[14]. Two stamps by their appearance resemble bear's paws, while only a half of the third stamp was preserved, of usual appearance in the form of a small knife with a short handle and the arch shaped blade. Along with obliquely serrated functional part of the damaged stamp, and clearly distinguished teeth in the form of nails of the bear's paws, in the text are mentioned the stamps in the form of the letter „S", probably modelled with the same tools, wich are not visible in the drawings (we must admit that the text in not quite clear to us, as it is rather succint and speaks of baked clay bear's paws as being figurines). This seems particularly significant if one bears in mind that the stamped pottery from Grigorovska gradina (fortified settlement) is connected with the break-through of the younger Babadag and Basarabi culture from the lower Danube area.

Several ceramic stamps in the form of small knives, along with the functional part for the impression of the pseudo-cord motif, also contain small, generally circular stamps, modelled at the end of short handle. Such are the stamp from the Insula Banului settlement in Iron Gate (T. II/4), Babadag in Dobruja (T. I/4), Cavadineşti in South Moldavia (T. II/2), Noşlac in Transylvania (T. II/8), and Cozia in Moldavia (T. III/6)[15].

Ceramic tools for the ornamentation of vessels by the technique of stamping, by whose imprint the so-called pseudo-corded motif, of *Pseudoschnur,* is obtained, are mainly of similar shape, with arch modelled functional part and a short, usually conical handle held by three fingers. The differences in the shape of tools depend on the vertical, oblique or horizontal position of the short handle in the relation to the toothed or serrated functional part of the tool wich is turned downwards[16].

The impression of this stamp into wet clay of vessel before baking, leaves narrow strings of multiform short (generally, transverse or oblique) notches, similar to the impression of a thin, pleated cord, wich gave this technique its name. Differences we note in the shapes of the pseudo-cord depend on the manner in wich the functional part of the stamping tool is modelled. Although drawings of individual ceramic tools are insufficiently clear to ascertain the manner in wich the stamping part of the tool was made, we can assume that the stamps for the impression in the Noua-Sabatinovka, Babadag and Insula Banului groups, or from the Early Iron Age level in the lower Danube and South Russia areas, most frequently had a serrated functional part wich leaves the impressions resembling a small wheel or the teeth of a comb, like the bone tools[17]. Two baked clay tools from the Popeşti-Novaci settlement, near Bucharest, belonging to the Basarabi culture, have somewhat differently modelled functional part that is impressed (T. II/5, 7). The final, arched part of the tools „blade" is somewhat thickner and in the first case- obliquely serrated, while in the other it seems that indented crosses were on the part that is impressed into wet clay of a vessel. Pot-

tery ornamented by this kind of pseudo-cord has shallowly impressed, narrowly grooved lines with small holes. Two tools from Remetea Mare, and Valea Timişului settlements, belonging to the Basarabi culture level in Banat, also leave the impressions with obliquely serrated, small rhomboid fields within narrow, shallow grooves, making so-called „small" pseudo-cord[18]. Drawings of these tools do not provide certain appearance of the functional part wich is presented as finely serrated. The cross-section of this tool with a level „blade", and the appearance of the impressed lines of the pseudo-cord rather suggest the serrated tools (T. III/1, 3).

We have recognized a baked clay tools in the shape of a sector, resembling a bourek knife, from the prehistorical site in the Borec village, near Plovdiv, Tracia. Judging by the opening in the upper part (that sereved to hang the tool on a string), the author has proclaimed it — an appendage or an amulet[19]. According to the published photograf, this tool is of somewhat larger dimensions, and, it seems, lacks the serrated functional part; possibly it was used to impress shallowly stamped lines or narrow grooves (T. III/4).

Before pointing to several baked clay tools discovered on the Early Iron Age in Serbia, we can also mention a bone tool originating from the Ormož settlement on the Drava[20]. Transversally serrated longer side of the tool, in the shape of ablunted blade, may have been used for the stamping of wet clay of a vessel in order to produce the pseudo-cord found on vessels from the late phase of the Ruše group. Let us note that the pottery decorated with the pseudo-cord, along with rare vessels ornamented with the impressions of „S" motif and small concentric circles, connected by tangents of the pseudo-cord, was found in this settlement belonging to the younger *Urnenfelder* and the Early Iron Age cultures. The manner of the organization of the pseudo-cord strings and other shapes of the impressed motifs point to the similarities to the pottery of Insula Banului and Babadag groups, wich probably came to those parts in the time of Thraco-Cimmerians invasion. We even think that some of the appenda is in the shape of semicircular thin tablets made of bronze with finely serrated base side, like the one found on the Early Iron Age site in Vinica, south of Bela Krajna, were possibly used for the ornamentation of pottery by the pseudo-cord technique[21]. In any case it would be useful to compare the impressions of those bronze, comb-like appendages, found in several Early Iron Age cultures in N—E Balkans and S—E Alpine region, with the impression of the pseudo-cord on vessels from the same cultures. E. Voss (a professional conservator) has recently, while investigating manners of ornamentation of the hallstatt poterry, supposed that the pseudo-cord motif technique, as a part of pottery encrustation technique, consists in the impression of a tool made of bone, metal or wood[22]. The author has also presupposed the appearance of a wooden tool for the impression of the pseudo-cord motif, in the form of a small knife with the serrated blade (T. I/5), pointing out the erroneus term *Rollrädchenzier,* i.e. that is not the case of ornamentation by a small wheel.

So far we collected ten baked clay tools from the territory of Serbia that were used for the ornamentation of vessels by the pseudo-cord

technique (T. IV/1-8; V/1-2). These tools were discovered in the early and later stage of the older Iron Age settlements, often with the pottery ornamented by them. Most remarkable is the find of a small tool in the shape of a sector, discovered in a low earthen tumulus from the site in the village of Melaje, on the Pester plateau. This ceramic stamp was found in the base of the mound, together with remains of a pyre, and along with fragments of vessels ornamented by the pseudo-cord technique. All tools are of similar shape, with more or less prominently arched functional part impressed into vessels.

According to the manner the functional part of the tool, i.e. the stamp itself, is shaped, we can distinguish three kinds of impresse motifs; all can be designated as the result of the pseudo-cord technique. Most numerous are the tools with narrow functional part, alternately serrated on both sides. Here belongs two tools from the Crvena livada settlement, near Svetozarevo; the tool from the settlement in the village of Donje Štiplje, near Svetozarevo; the tool from the tumulus in Melaje near Novi Pazar; and the tool from the village of Mazgoš, near Dimitrovgrad. These tools have similar shape, with a short handle at the top, above arch-shaped and serrated „blade". A small ceramic tool-stamp in the form of a sector, was recently discovered in the multi-level open prehistorical settlement of Svetozarevo-Panjevacki rit (T. V/2). The regularly modelled fan-like part of the tool, has on its sides long, very narrow notches wich densely go down and confront themselves on the narrow, thinned part of the stamp, i.e. the part is impressed into the wet clay of a vessel.

When impressed into the wet clay of a vessel, these ceramic stamps leave narrow, so-called tremolated lines. Two tools are similar by manner of impression; one originates from the Early Iron Age settlement in the village of Velesnica, in the Iron Gate (T. IV/6), and the other from the developed Iron Age settlement Oraovica, Preševo (T. IV/7). Both ceramic stamps — the one from Velesnica is in the shape of a small knife with a short handle, while the other, from Oraovica is in the form of a pyramid with narrow, rectangulat basis — consist of narrowly modelled functional „blade" wich is regularly serrated. „teeth" of those two stamps are of uneven length, and by the shallow impression into the walls of a vessel leave small rectangular stamp within a narrow groove (Velesnica), or unconnected impression in a straight line, resembling a small wheel (Oraovica). A ceramic stamp in the shape of an anchor, from a multilevel prehistorical settlement in Alibunar, in the south part of Banat (where the Early Iron Age pottery was also found) was published recently (T. IV/8). Apart from its shape, this tool is distinguished by somewhat wider functional part, i.e. half-arch curved „blade" on the bottom part wich shallow, oblique notches on it. The form of the pseudo-cord produced by this tool we usually call „big pseudo-cord" because within the wider groove we find somewhat larger rectangular fields.

At the present it is difficult to say how significant are the differences in the shape of ceramic tools we have established, at the same time distinguishing three particular variants of the pseudo-cord (Map. 1). Especially as the differences among the pseudo-cord impressions are

less noticeable when filled-up with white encrustation. We would like to stress the fact that the tools with serrated functional part leaving so-called tremolated lines, were not found only in the Basarabi culture settlment in the central Morava Valley region, but also on sites beyond the southern border of the Basarabi complex (Melaje, near Novi Pazar; Vuči Dol, near Skopje). In any case, the tools for the ornamentation of Basarabi pottery with stamped motifs, confirm closeness of our region, i.e. the northern part of the Central Balkans, to the Carpathian-lower Danube region. Foregoing remarks on tools for the ornamentation of vessels by technique of the pseudo-cord motif, also confirm the ties of the Basarabi culture to the Early Iron Age cultures in the lower Danube ares. We can say that the border where the pseudo-cord motifs, characteristic for the Early Iron Age cultures, pass into sö-called „small pseudo-cord" or into „tremolated pseudo-cord", wich seems to be the youngest and maybe the only belonging exclusively to the Basarabi culture — is rather elusive. The technique of the ornamentation of the vessels with the pseudo-cord strings reaches its peak in the Basarabi culture, and vanishes with the disappearance of the Basarabi style in pottery. It is important to note that recently the difference between the Basarabi complex, frequently identified with the horizon of pottery ornamented in rich Basarabi style, and the classical Basarabi culture, is more cleary recognized. We believe that the debate on the forms of the pseodo-cord motif within the Basarabi complex can contribute to the solution of these questions.

NOTES

1 S. Morintz, *Contribuții arheologice la istoria tracilor timpurii*, I, București, 1978, p. 28—40; B. Hänsel, *Beitrage zur regionalen und chronologischen Gliederung der älteren Hallstattzeit an den unteren Donau*, Bonn, 1976, p. 118—229; G. Tonceva, *Studia Thracica*, 5, 1980, p. 24—60.

2 S. Marinescu-Bîlcu, *Thraco-Dacica*, II, 1981, fig. 1/8—12, 15, p. 23—36.

3 G. Tonceva, *op. cit.*, Pl. XXVIII, p. 71—73.

4 H. Todorova, *Thracia*, 1, 1972, Abb I/1, p. 67—100; B. Hänsel, *op. cit.*, T. 43/4.

5 A. László, *MemAntiq*, I, 1969, p. 319—325.

6 B. Hänsel, *op. cit.*, Taf. 43, abb 1—10.

7 B. N. Grakov, 1977, p. 182—194; S. Morintz, *Contribuții*..., p. 152—160.

8 A. I. Meliukova, *MIA*, 64, 1958, Ris 27/5, p. 5—102

9 S. Morintz, *Contribuții*..., fig. 80/9, 10 (two tools), p. 141.

10 V. Leahu, *Cultura Tei*, București, 1966, fig. 7/3, p. 65—67.

11 S. Morintz, *Contribuții*..., fig. 89/7, p. 154.

12 A. I. Meliukova, *op. cit.*, Ris 1/15, 16, p. 10.

13. M. Nica, *Thraco-Dacica*, VII, 1—1, 1987, fig. 16/2 and 9/4, pg. 35.

14 G. I. Smirnova, *Thracia*, V, 1980, Ris (4, 11, 12, p. 130.

15 S. Morintz, P. Roman, *SCIV*, 20, 1969, 3, fig. 7/10, p. 400 (Insula Banului); S. Morintz, *Thraco-Dacica*, VIII, 1987, 1—2, fig. 11/2 (Babadag); B. Hänsel, *op. cit.*, T. 43/5, 6 for Cozia and Cavadinești; T. Soroceanu, 1984, abb 2, s 436 (T IX/9) for Noșlac.

16 According to B. Hänsel the impression is based on the principle of the meat cleaver *(Wiegemesser prinzip)* and some tools resemble miniature cleavers with a short handle and a wide, massive blade (B. Hänsel, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

17 See tools collected by B. Hänsel, 1976, T. 43/2, 7—9.

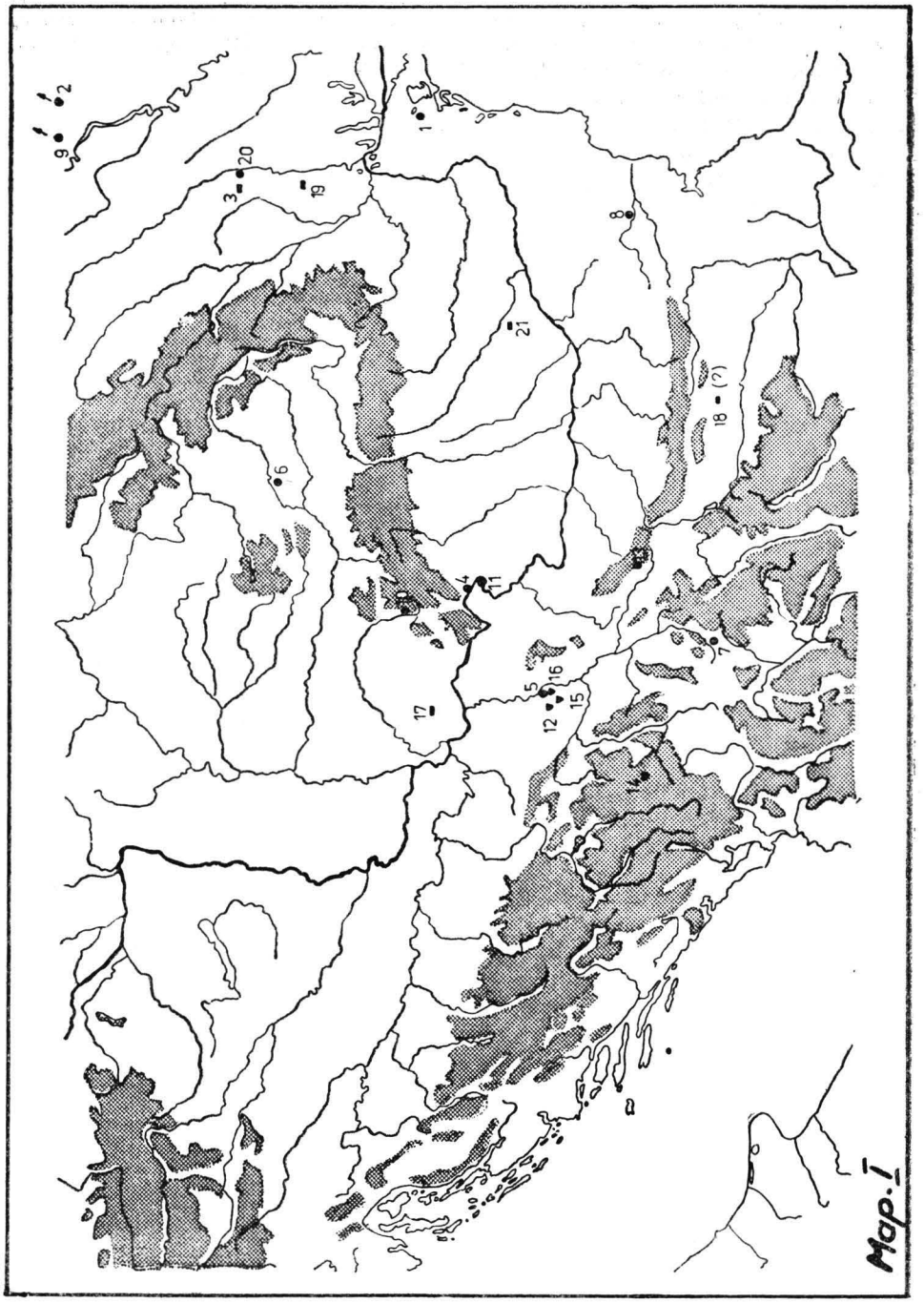
18. M. Gumă. *Banatica*, VII, 1983, Pl. XXXII/1, 2, p. 65—138.

19 P. Detev, *GAMP1*, V, 1963, Obr 3/4. p. 50.

20 B. Lamut, 1989, 238 ff.

21 J. Dular, 1975, 111. 4, p. 562.

22 E. Voss, 1988, p. 15.

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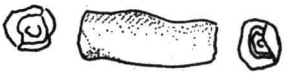
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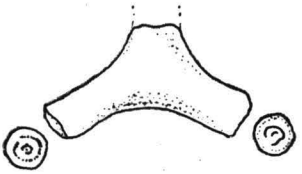
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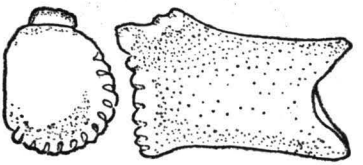
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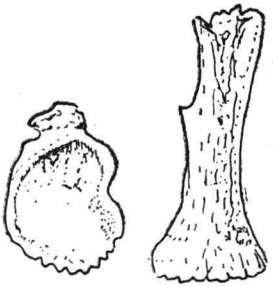
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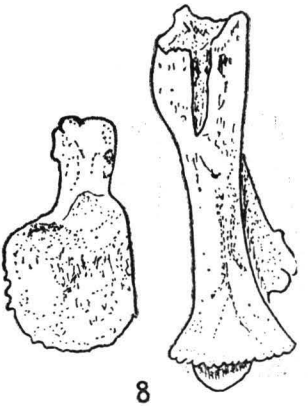
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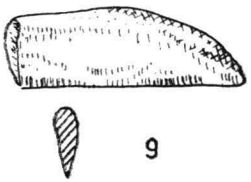
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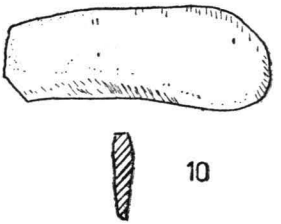
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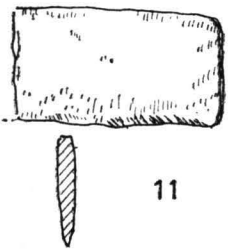
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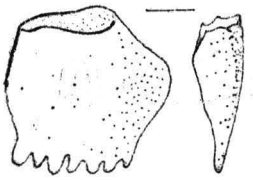

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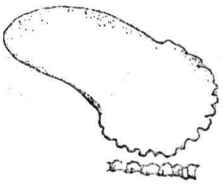

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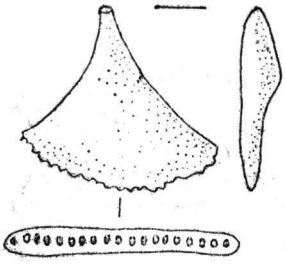

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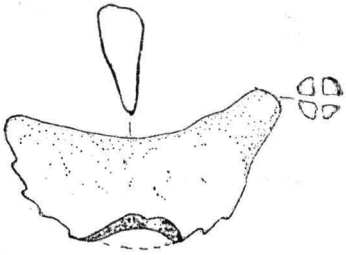

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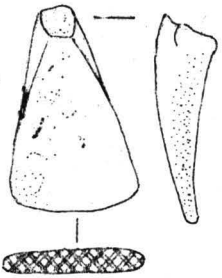

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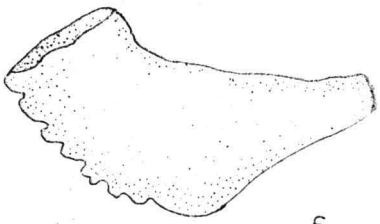

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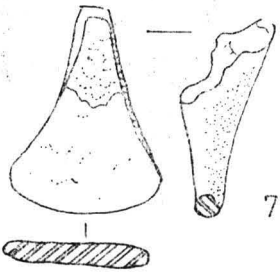

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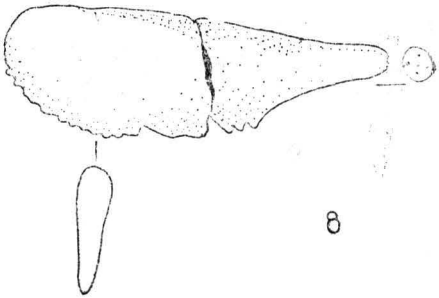

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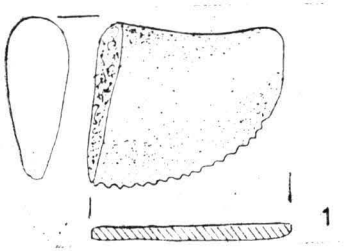

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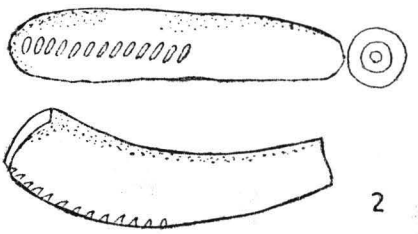

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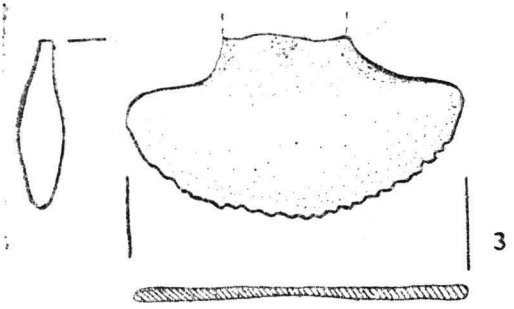

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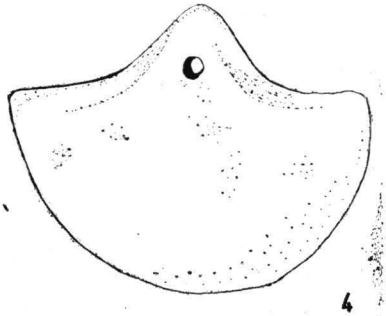

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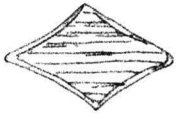

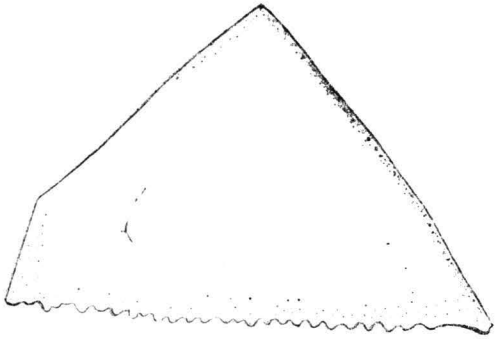

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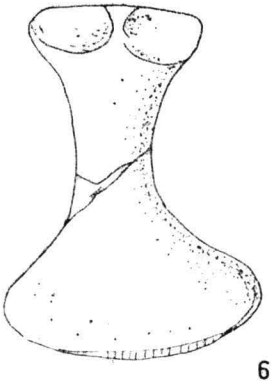
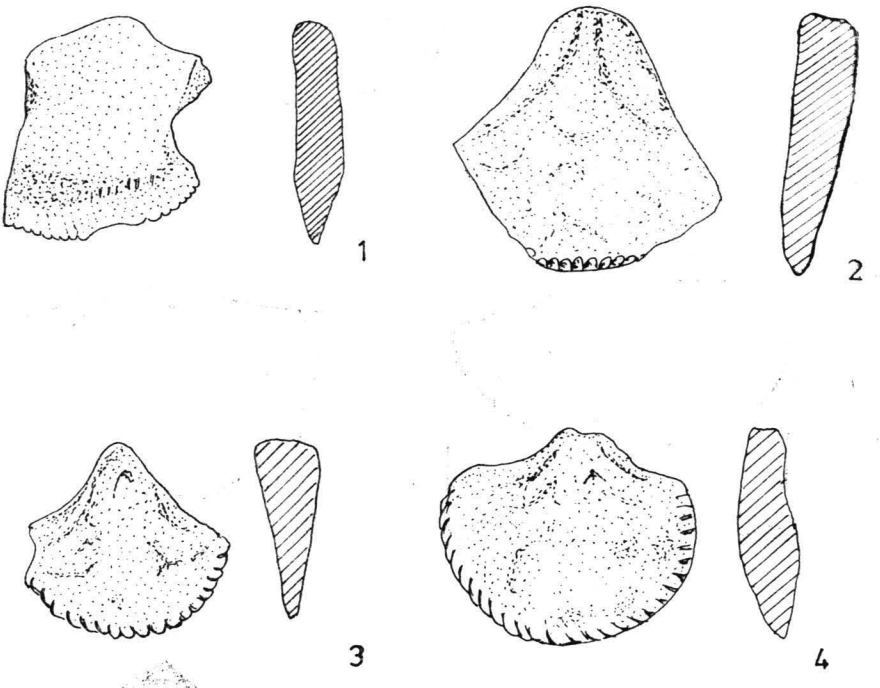
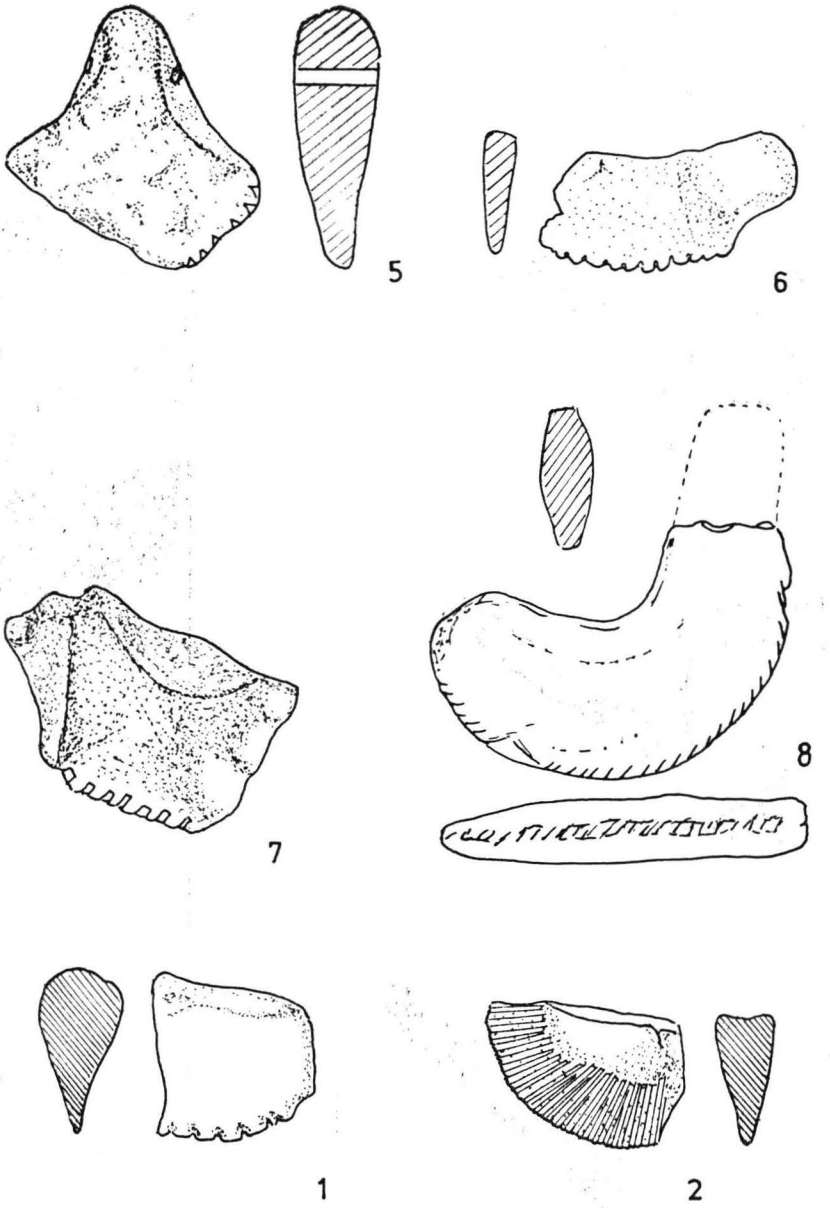


6

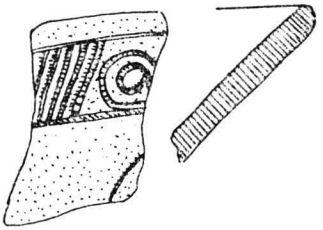
T. III

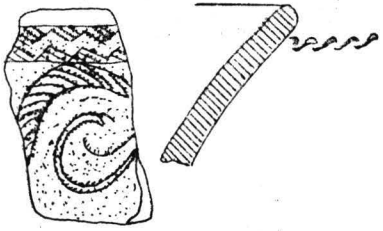


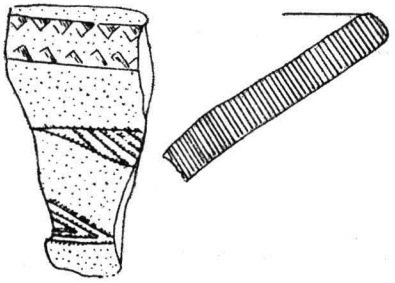
T. IV

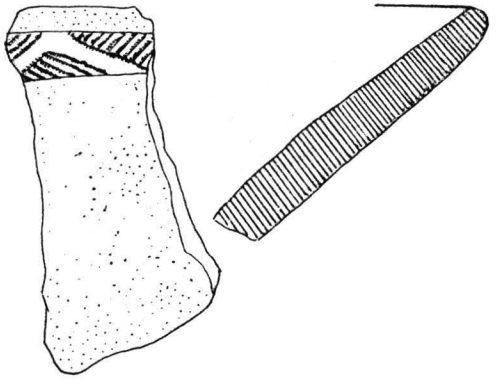


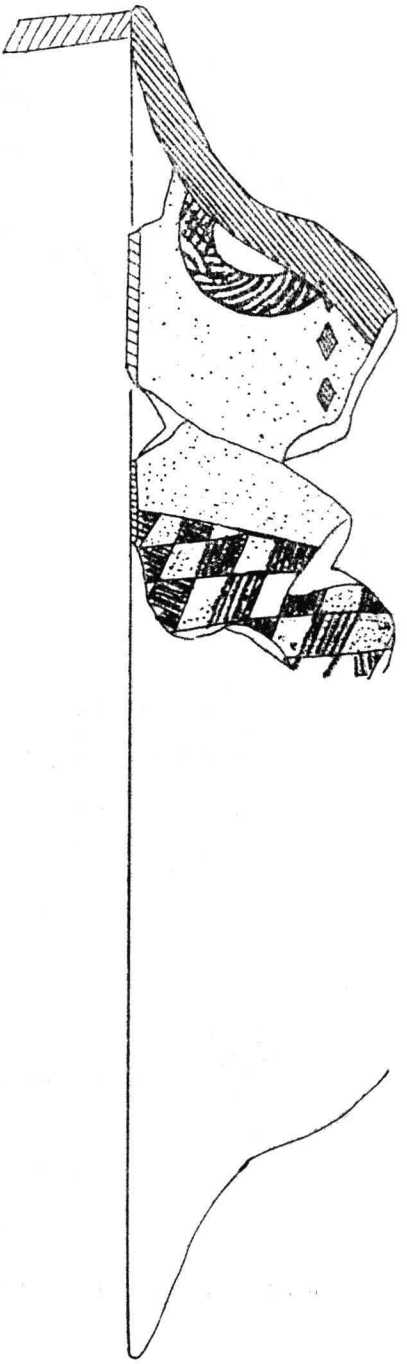
T. IV (continued: 5, 6, 7, 8); T. V (1, 2).



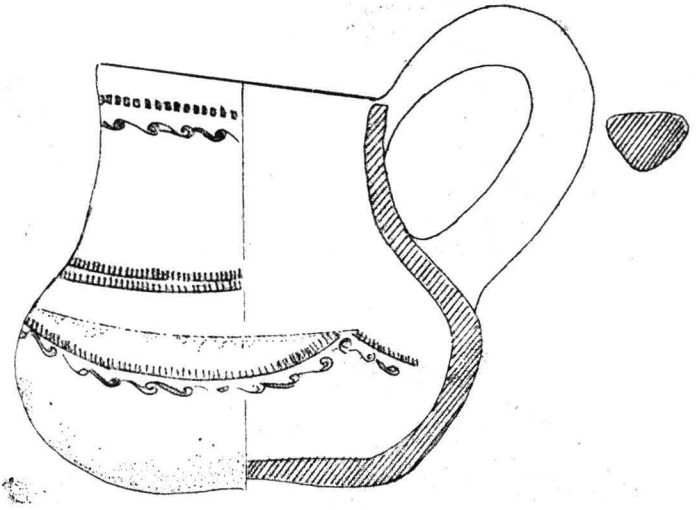


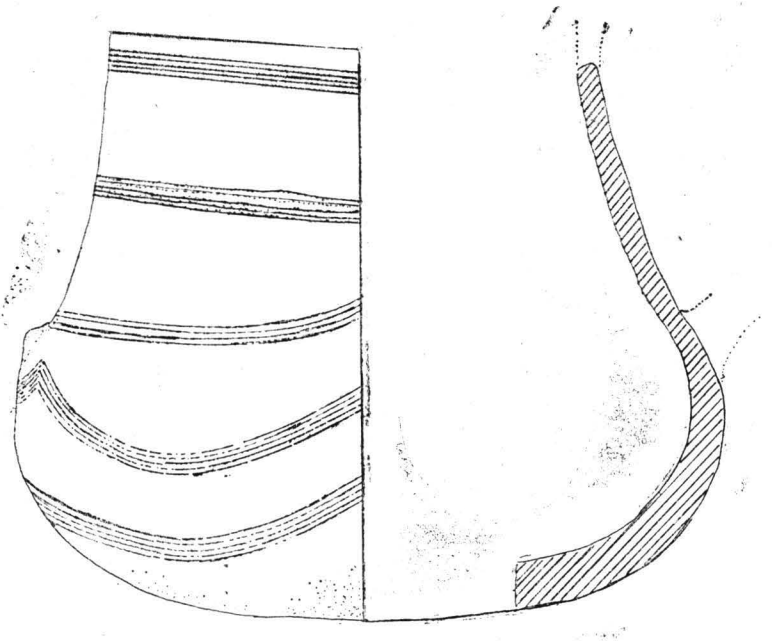




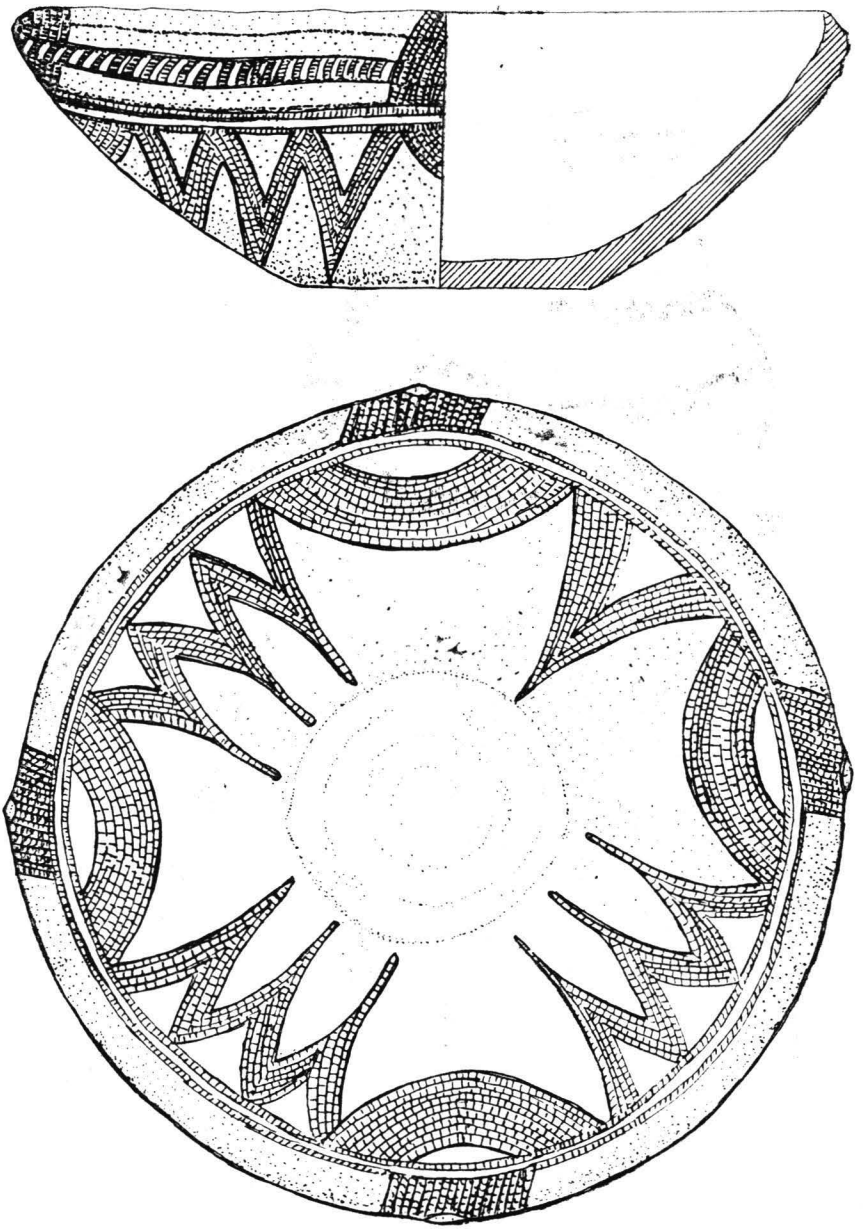


T. VI





T. VII



T. VIII